

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SS-15 IO-13 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 CIAE-00

INR-07 NSAE-00 DODE-00 OES-06 L-03 ACDA-07 OMB-01

/076 W

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R 091255Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA

RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4191

INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ADANA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

AMCONSUL IZMIR

C O N F I D E N T I A L ANKARA 5259

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS, TU

SUBJECT: APPROACH TO GOT ON SAILING OF SISMİK I (HORA)

REF: STATE 166412

1. DURING MEETING WITH MFA SEC GEN ELEKDAG MORNING JULY 9 (SEPTELS) I REGISTERED, IN THE NAME OF THE SECRETARY, CONTINUING USG CONCERN THAT TURKEY ACT WITH RESTRAINT IN THE AEGEAN (REFTEL). ELEKDAG LISTENED CAREFULLY AND IN RESPONSE SAID THAT IT IS HIS IMPRESSION THAT GOG IS "MAKING A LOT OF FUSS--UNFOUNDED FUSS-- ABOUT THE SAILING OF THE SISMİK" (NEE HORA). HE SAID, "IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT THE GREEKS WANT. WE UNDERSTAND THEY HAVE BEEN IN TOUCH WITH YOU AND OTHER OF OUR NATO ALLIES SAYING THE OPERATIONS OF THE SISMİK WILL VIOLATE GREEK RIGHTS BECAUSE THEY WILL TAKE PLACE OVER THE GREEK CONTINENTAL SHELF." ELEKDAG SAID THE LIMITS OF THE GREEK CONTINENTAL SHELF HAD NOT BEEN DETERMINED AND FOR THIS REASON THE GOG COULD NOT CLAIM THAT TURKEY WOULD BE VIOLATING THEIR RIGHTS. HE SAID TURKEY WILL CONDUCT ITS SEISMIC OPERATIONS IN TURKISH

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TERRITORIAL WATERS AND IN THE OPEN SEA. HE ARGUED THAT IF

THE GOG SAYS THAT TURKEY SHOULD CONDUCT SEISMIC OPERATIONS ONLY IN TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS, IT FOLLOWS THAT GREECE IS CLAIMING THE WHOLE AEGEAN TO BE PART OF ITS CONTINENTAL SHELF. ELEKDAG THEN POINTED OUT THAT SHIPS OF GREEK AND OTHER REGISTRY, INCLUDING PRIVATE COMPANIES FROM THE UNITED STATE, HAD CONDUCTED SEISMIC OPERATIONS THROUGHOUT THE AEGEAN IN PREVIOUS YEARS. HE SAID THAT TURKEY HAD NOT PROTESTED THESE BECAUSE NO DRILLING HAD BEEN INVOLVED. HE CONCLUDED HIS REPOSE BY SAYING, "I DON'T UNDERSTAND THIS FUSS AND I DON'T UNDERSTAND HOW THE GREEKS CAN CONVINCE YOU TO DO THIS."

2. I ANSWERED THAT I WAS NOT MAKING THIS APPROACH ON BEHALF OF THE GREEK GOVERNMENT. I SAID, AS I HAD EARLIER IN MY INITIAL PRESENTATION, THAT WE ARE SIMILARLY URGING RESTRAINT IN ATHENS. I SAID THE REASON WE ARE DOING SO IS THAT WE SEE TWO FRIENDS AND ALLIES WALKING INTO A POTENTIALLY DANGEROUS SITUATION. I SAID WE ARE AFRAID THAT AN INCIDENT MIGHT OCCUR AND WE ARE THEREFORE COUNSELING RESTRAINT ON BOTH SIDES. WE HAVE URGED THE GREEKS NOT TO BE EXCESSIVELY SENSITIVE IN ITS REACTION AND WE ARE URGING TURKS TO BE CIRCUMSPECT IN THEIR ACTIONS. I POINTED OUT THAT ALTHOUGH THE DELIMITATION OF THE CONTINENTAL SHELF WAS STILL DISPUTED, THERE IS A SIGNIFICANT AREA OF THE AEGEAN THAT IS CLEARLY TURKISH CONTINENTAL SHELF. I EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT THE GOT WOULD CONCENTRATE ITS OPERATIONS IN THIS AREA.

3. ELEKDAG AGAIN SAID THAT THE GREEKS HAD EARLIER CONDUCTED SEISMIC OPERATIONS AND IN FACT HAD GONE FURTHER. HE POINTED OUT THAT THEY WERE NOW DRILLING NEAR THASSOS IN AN AREA OUTSIDE OF GREEK TERRITORIAL WATERS. HE THEN SAID, "IF YOU ARE TELLING US NOT TO OPERATE OUTSIDE OF TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS, YOU ARE SUPPORTING THE GREEK THESIS."

4. I POINTED OUT THAT I HAD NOT MADE SUCH A SUGGESTION, THAT I HAD SIMPLY SAID THAT WITH ALL THE PROBLEMS THERE ARE IN THE WORLD TODAY, WE WERE URGING THAT TWO OF OUR ALLIES ACT WITH RESTRAINT AND AVOID CREATING ANOTHER ONE.

5. ELEKDAG CONCLUDED THIS PORTION OF OUR CONVERSATION BY CONFIDENTIAL

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ASKING ME TO ADVISE WASHINGTON THAT TURKEY HAS ALWAYS ACTED WITH CIRCUMSPECTION IN THESE KINDS OF THINGS. HE SAID ONE OF THE REASONS THE GOT HAD DECIDED TO CONDUCT SEISMIC SURVEYS IN THE OPEN SEAS WAS THAT THE GREEKS HAD PUBLICLY SAID THE GOT HAD NO RIGHT TO. ELEKDAG SAID THAT IN THIS SENSE GREECE HAD PROVOKED TURKEY INTO TAKING THIS ACTION. HE ALSO SAID THAT THERE ARE PEOPLE WITHIN THE DEMIREL GOVERNMENT, AS WELL AS IN THE OPPOSITION, WHO FEEL THAT TURKEY MUST ASSERT HER

RIGHTS IN THE AEGEAN. NEVERTHELESS, IT IS NOT TURKEY'S INTENTION FLAGRANTLY TO PROVOKE GREECE. HE SAID GOT HAD NO INTENTION OF SENDING THE SISMIK INTO "AREAS WHERE CONFLICT IS DENSE." HE ENDED BY SAYING "LOGIC AND RATIONALITY STILL PREVAIL ON OUR SIDE."

6. COMMENT: I BELIEVE ELEKDAG WAS PREPARED TO RESPOND TO WHAT HE ANTICIPATED WOULD BE A ONE-SIDED DEMARCHE THAT TURKEY NOT ENGAGE IN PROVOCATIVE ACTIONS. THE FACT THAT WE ARE MAKING SIMILAR APPROACH IN ATHENS TOOK SOME OF THE EDGE OFF HIS RESPONSE. NEVERTHELESS, AND DESPITE HIS ASSURANCES ABOUT LOGIC AND RATIONALITY, THERE IS NO QUESTION GOT WILL WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS UNDERTAKE SEISMIC OPERATIONS IN THE EASTERN AEGEAN SEA BOTH INSIDE AND OUTSIDE TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS. IN OTHER WORDS, NOTHING WE OR ANY OTHER FRIEND OF TURKEY MAY SAY IS LIKELY TO DISSUADE THE GOT FROM OPERATING THE HORA FOR A PORTION OF ITS CRUISE OUTSIDE TURKISH TERRITORIAL WATERS. WE ARE ALMOST CERTAIN THAT IN THIS PROCESS, THE SISMIK WILL IMPINGE ON DISPUTED CONTINENTAL SHELF AREAS. ON THE OTHER HAND, AND AT LEAST IN PART AS A RESULT OF THE CUMULATIVE DEMARCHES OF ALL OF TURKEY'S FRIENDS, SISMIK'S OPERATIONS ARE LIKELY TO BE CAREFULLY CALCULATED NOT REPEAT NOT TO APPEAR FLAGRANTLY PROVOCATIVE. MACOMBER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TERRITORIAL WATERS, CONTINENTAL SHELF, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, AEGEAN, NEGOTIATIONS, SISMIL I
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 JUL 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: BoyleJA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ANKARA05259
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760267-0075
From: ANKARA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760776/aaaacost.tel
Line Count: 137
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 76 STATE 166412
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: BoyleJA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20 APR 2004 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <04 AUG 2004 by BoyleJA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: APPROACH TO GOT ON SAILING OF SISMIL I (HORA)
TAGS: PLOS, TU, GR, (ELEKDAG)
To: n/a
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006